

10 December 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 10 December Meeting of the "Indochina Steering Group"

1. This was a rather short and disjointed meeting covering many topics rather quickly. [REDACTED] of OER reported that they had finished their OB paper which he hoped to have circulated to the people who are concerned soon. He mentioned that it should be tightly held. There was some discussion of briefing General Bennett who had asked for a written report, but who would only be getting an oral briefing.

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2. [REDACTED] reported that the Ban Ban operation was behind schedule, by about a week. They are trying to get an extension for it. He also noted that two [REDACTED] battalions were going into Laos, probably to [REDACTED]

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3. There was some discussion of [REDACTED] feeling that the reporting from Cambodia was fuzzy, unfocussed, and overly optimistic. [REDACTED]

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(This is the first I have heard of this. Are we supposed to be thinking about such a person?)

4. I reported that Stan's memo on Cambodia in the dry season was almost ready, but that we were waiting for OER's input. [REDACTED] said we would get it today.

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5. [REDACTED] apologized that he had not yet finished his draft to the Director concerning South Vietnamese elections, but that he hoped to have it in a day or two and would see that we had a chance to look at it before it was sent forward.

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6. [REDACTED] said that Secretary of Defense Laird had requested from CIA a review of the status and location of POWs being held in Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam, as well as North Vietnam. It seemed clear to [REDACTED] that while Laird felt that DIA intelligence

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[REDACTED] analysis on this question was not up to snuff, he also was angling for a way to get CIA involved in this problem. [REDACTED] said we would try to get a joint report out. He also noted that we were having some difficulty getting Giant Scale photography from the Pentagon. In the last take they had withheld 6 of 10 reels of photography. This clearly will limit our ability to undertake the review Laird asked for and [REDACTED] is in contact with people in the Pentagon to try to find out what the hold up is.

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7. [REDACTED] had a few other short items of information to pass on:

a. The cease fire paper needs further work. We are recommending that it is not ready yet for the Senior Review Group.

b. No one knows where NSSM 99 stands at this moment.

c. There will be a WSAG meeting tomorrow to consider Indochina contingency plans. [REDACTED] is going to brief them.

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d. Fulbright is trying to get the Director to come next week to talk about Sontay. Needless to say, we are opposing this and trying to find some way to avoid it.

e. The Moose-Lowenstein report is in, and while it is clearly critical, it nevertheless says that military assistance would be better devoted to Cambodia which is fighting a national war than to South Vietnam which is involved in a civil war.

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[REDACTED]  
Chief, Far East Division